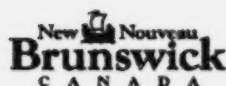


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News Release

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Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

Government willing to begin exploratory talks on aboriginal and treaty rights (02/06/07)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) -- The New Brunswick government is ready to sit down with federal and aboriginal representatives to discuss establishing a process to address issues related to aboriginal and treaty rights.

Justice Minister Brad Green, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, has responded to an invitation from Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Robert Nault to enter into exploratory talks.

"I have informed Minister Nault that the Government of New Brunswick is prepared to participate in exploratory talks on the understanding that participation in such discussions does not constitute a commitment by any of the parties to enter into formal negotiations," Green said.

"It is the view of the government that it is both appropriate and desirable for the Province to accept Minister Nault's invitation to participate in exploratory talks."

In addition to preliminary discussions between federal and provincial officials, Nault has also been in contact with the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet leadership in New Brunswick about the possibility of such talks.

"It is clear that issues involving aboriginal and treaty rights affect all New Brunswickers, including relations between the provincial government and aboriginal people," Green said. "We are committed to working with aboriginal leaders and communities and with the federal government to improve the lives of aboriginal people and communities in New Brunswick."

Federal officials have organized a workshop for aboriginal, provincial and federal representatives to be held later this month.

02/06/07

MEDIA CONTACT: Dan Horsman, executive director, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 506-457-6824.

02/06/07

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